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LOOKING IN
on the conference

Briand Living Type of Old Western Sheriff, Lacking
Only a Wide Hat and Two Six Shooters—Dele-
gates Assure France of Protection.

By EDWIN C. HILL.
Special Despatch to THE NEW YORK HERALD.
New York Herald Bureau,
Washington, D. C., Nov. 21.

A succession of pictures, stately, ab-
sorbing, inspiring, combining to form a
spectacle of human hope. Such was the
conference once more in open session.
Great words were spoken, words of frater-
nity and noble aspirations. France,
through Briand, justifying her fears and
her strength of arm; England, Italy, Ja-
pan, Belgium and America, through Bal-
four, Schanzer, Kato, De Cartier and
Hughes, honoring France and reassuring
her. Yet if every speaker, arising in his
place and precedence, had been as silent
as the folded standard of his country no
message would have been lost.

Two thousand men and women, famous
or obscure, winnowings of 20,000 that
sought the privilege to fill the three up-
stairing galleries of the auditorium of
the Memorial Continental Hotel, the site of
the home of a President, James Madis-
on. The floor is a hollow square of
people massed in orderly rows about the
U shaped, barge covered table where the
delegates sit. They arrive silently and
find their chairs as inaudibly as if the
place were a church. No frivolity, little
murmur of tongues. As the delegates
talk in groups—Balfour and Hughes,
Lodge, Underwood and Jusserand, Bri-
and and Root—the people survey this
new theatre of history.

The auditorium is dignified and also
charming. The walls are of the tint
of ivory, restrainedly decorated with
garlands of fruits and flowers. The
lofty ceiling is of ground glass arranged
in ornamental squares. Flags depending
from the cornices represent the States of
the Union and recall the old republics
of Texas and California. Set into one
gallery facade is an illuminated clock
of gold and white, bearing the arms of
Maryland. In the galleries at the north
and south hang paintings of George and
Martha Washington. On either side of
the procession arch at the front are
boxes crowded with women. In one of
these Mrs. Harding sits, with a view of
the entire floor.

Eleven o'clock arrives and without
further admonition the delegates end
conversation and take their appointed
chairs. The chamber flares with un-
expected light, which casts a curious,
inhuman radiance. The world wants
fresh pictures of the peace makers in
session and there is dead stillness until
the voracious cameras are sated. Briand,
bent a little forward, twiddles the
thumbs of his clasped hands. Balfour's
half smile reflects some impetuous
emotion. The Japanese sit like fixed,
brown statues. Hughes' keen eyes
twinkle with the humor that is so much
of a part of him since his reappearance
in public life.

You are struck instantly with a com-
parison almost grotesque yet singularly
true. Briand, heavy shouldered and
powerful of body, with a big and rugged
head, bristling eyebrows and a bushy,
downward curving mustache, is a living
picture of the sheriffs that kept order in
the days of the old West. Clothe this
stout, elderly Frenchman with Stetson
hat, vest, chaps and a gunbelt and you
would have a figure from our history of
the winning of the West. For a moment
he is perfectly silent, left hand sunk in
trousers pocket, tips of the fingers of
his right hand resting lightly upon the
table. He begins gently, quite delibera-
tely, every word issuing clean cut and
clear from a resonant voice. From that
commanding figure, which holds the at-
tention of the audience so completely
that you hear people breathing all
around, there radiate power, purpose,
devotion, sincerity.

Presently, as he expounds the facts
that make France suspect the purpose
of an unrepentant Germany, he takes
fire. Flame shows in his deepest eyes.
His rigid hands cut the air with slash-
ing gestures. More than ever he sug-
gests the sheriff of the vanished West.
If two big guns should materialize in
the swift moving hands of this powerful
figure in the staid attire of diplomacy
they would surely be incongruous. A

voice behind this writer says softly: "A
lion in a den of Daniels." Briand's
voice is chromatic, rhythmic; now fall-
ing into levels of pathos, now springing
triumphantly to heights of pride; the
measured instrument of a master of
pitch and timbre. After eighteen min-
utes he takes his seat and the competent
cameramen rapidly and with true or-
atorical talents, so that little perhaps of
the surge and sweep of Briand is lost,
puts into English the first period of the
speech.

Speaking further, in two more such
periods, he puts the case of France with
fire and spirit, telling the world plainly
that if the Powers cannot guarantee the
security of France in a disturbed
Europe, "if France must stand alone,"
then France must not be denied the
right to protect herself. And he ends,
after fifty-one minutes, with an appeal
for such moral support for his country
as would extinguish Germany's aims.
Applause, which had saluted the Premier
from time to time, now rises to sustained
acclaim. He leans back, a little pale
one thinks, to hear the verdict of the
conference.

Balfour, marvellously virile, with his
out of doors color and his firm and well
fleshed figure, expresses with grace-
fulness that soothes like the notes of a
distant violin the appreciation of the
conference at having been initiated into
"the anxious doubts of France." There
is a murmur of pleasure among the
French, but Briand gazes silently, stead-
ily, thoughtfully. Balfour leaves little
doubt in the minds of his hearers as to
what England's course would be if
France again should be unjustly at-
tacked. It is a note that Schanzer for
Italy repeats. Then stands Baron Kato
for Japan, a slim, almost emaciated
figure, eyes lustreless and melancholy
in a face the color of old ivory. He
speaks in Japanese, in tones that fall
with a kind of mournful echo, and when
he finishes his interpreter puts his mes-
sage into English and into French.
Then follow De Cartier de Marchienne,
the Belgian, to say that his country
stands toward France where it has stood
for 800 years.

There is a pause. Hughes gets to his
feet, a bold, confident, invigorating fig-
ure. His heavy white mustache, curling
upward, slightly sweeps his healthy
cheeks, dominating the close cropped
beard. The delegates stiffen with new
kindled interest. Briand ceases writing
and leans back in his chair, facing the
American spokesman. Prince Tokugawa,
Kato, Shidehara, fasten their keen glance
on this speaker. Hughes is brief, but as
he strides through his thought the face
of Jusserand, Ambassador of France in
America, lights up. For Hughes is tak-
ing the note of dependable friendship
for France sounded by Balfour and is
making it ring like a bell.

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